

Allen Borch  
Los Angeles

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Dear Alvin :

Cleaning out my desk I came across your letter of May 21. It's about time I answered it.

With regard to original stories - all ideas which you submit must at least to you appear to be fresh. I would not bother with a re-write of an old idea. There are experts out here who do that all the time and they have an edge. And don't worry about cycles. A fresh and unusual idea starts one. Keep off that merry go round.

Do you mean to tell me you can't write one page a night on spec ? Do you realise that in a month you will have 30 pages ? This is sheer nonsense to me. You are digging a large hole for yourself by being frightened. That's too easy. It is less easy to live without fright but it is more satisfying. And the fact that you plunged into pre writing without too much thought - and are making some sort of living at it speaks much for that way of doing things ( granted you have the ability ). Thought in great amounts and with too many sides results in dullness and sterility. Creative work is like love - it needs impulsiveness and no regard for obstacles

I don't want to hear you talk about making a living anymore. This is dead wood. It is taken for granted that ~~anything~~ you will do will result in some sort of living. So cast that thought into its proper place. If you want to make money as a primary objective - I recommend stealing on a legalised basis in some commercial enterprise. But if you expect to get rich writing you are an easymark for oil well salesman and other such characters who haul you in off the sidewalk into the chimera shop.

Forget the money part young man - that is the added feature. The main event is the idea and the writing of it - after that comes the spondulim. This is a hard idea to absorb and one that will undoubtedly outrage you in laws but as a man of experience I assure you it is the correct way. Anyway I warned you a long time ago that you were treading an unwise path. But now that you are on it, don't let it throw you. You have time to become a hack when you are my age.

I wish you wise and clarified moments.

AB